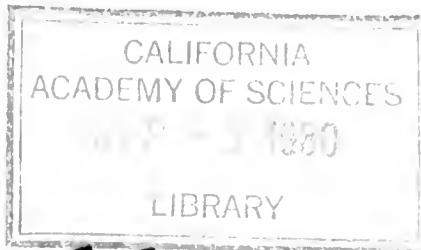


M&O  
Serials  
QL 671  
G84

190  
V.62:8

0164-971X



# the Gull

Vol. 62

Berkeley, Calif.

September 1980

Number 8

---

## The Motmot and the Sloth

These are not characters in one of Aesop's fables but two of the many fascinating sights to be seen in Panama. This tiny republic at the southern end of the isthmus which joins two continents is truly the "land bridge to the Americas." Upon this bridge can be found some of the most beautiful plant and bird life anywhere. There is, of course, the canal — an engineering marvel — but there are also natural marvels such as antbirds, trogons, puffbirds, monkeys and gorgeous flowering plants.

The great abundance of life in this neotropical area is the subject of the September general membership meeting. Chris Carpenter, co-leader with Joe Morlan of the GGAS tour to Panama in January, 1981, will show slides of his recent trip to Panama.

We have also arranged to show the film taken by Jeff Foott during the Condor Recovery Team's visit to the nest of the California Condor chick which subsequently died as a result of the visit. See Bob Hirt's statement on this subject on page 134.

The meeting will begin at 7:30 p.m. on Thursday, September 11, at the Northbrae Community Church, 941 The Alameda, Berkeley.

### NOTE SPECIAL DATE FOR OCTOBER MEETING

Mark your calendar now for *Wednesday, October 15*, six days later than our usual general membership meeting date, for an especially fine Program on the Isles of Scilly, England, to be given by naturalist David Hunt. Mr. Hunt is well known to many members of GGAS and the California Academy of Sciences as their guide around these isles which are his home. Full details in the October *Gull*.

—PROGRAM COMMITTEE

## Field Trips Calendar

**Saturday, September 13—Coastal San Francisco.** Meet at 7:30 a.m. at the parking lot between South and Middle Lakes (Chain of Lakes) near the 41st Ave. and Lincoln Way entrance to Golden Gate Park. We will bird in the park, Lake Merced and the Golden Gate National Recreation Area in search of early migrants in the City. We should also see many of the birds commonly found in the area. Bring your lunch and be prepared for cold weather near the coast. Leader: Dan Murphy (564-0074).

**Wednesday, September 17—Mini trip to Alameda Shoreline.** Meet at 8 a.m. in Alameda at Broadway and Shoreline Dr. for shorebirds. Lunch optional. Leaders: Ruth Voss and Delpha de Timofeev (632-5176).

**Saturday, September 20—Point Reyes.** Meet at 8 a.m. at the Larkspur Ferry Terminal parking lot (section H). From Hwy. 101 exit at Sir Francis Drake Blvd. and drive east to the terminal. From the Richmond-San Rafael Bridge drive toward San Francisco and turn left into the parking lot just before reaching Hwy. 101. We will carpool and caravan from there. Bring lunch and liquids. It may be foggy and cold near the coast so dress appropriately. We will look for vagrant birds in the islands of trees near the coast. Leader: Mary Louise Rosegay (386-1640). (✓)

**Saturday/Sunday, September 20/21—Yosemite National Park.** We will bird the forests and meadows along Glacier Point Rd. Bring warm clothes as it can be quite cold in the mountains in September. Due to campground closures it will be necessary for you to call the leader for all details. Leader: Jon Zablakis (642-2072, work; 527-2083, home).

(✓)

**Sunday, September 21—Alameda and San Leandro Bay Shoreline.** Meet at 9 a.m. in Alameda at Broadway and Shoreline Dr. We will bird the Elsie B. Roemer Bird Sanctuary and the San Leandro Bay Regional Shoreline. Bring lunch and liquids. Shorebirds should be present in numbers so bring a spotting scope. We should also see some waterfowl and land birds. Leader: Leora Feeney (522-8525).

---

*Published each month except August by the Golden Gate Audubon Society, office address 2718 Telegraph Avenue, Berkeley, CA 94705. Second class postage paid in Berkeley, CA. (THE GULL - USPS 417-705)*

**Saturday, September 27—Point Diablo.** Meet at the top of Bunker Hill where we will watch for migrating hawks and land birds between **10 a.m.** and **1:30 p.m.** From San Francisco drive north across the Golden Gate Bridge and take Alexander Ave. exit. Turn left as if to return to San Francisco, drive under the freeway and bear to the right. Go up the road to the Golden Gate National Recreation Area, continue along the road past the intersection with a road coming up from Rodeo Valley to the large tunnels on the right. Park and walk up the trail to the left of the second tunnel. We will bird from the observation point at the north end of the hilltop. If it's too foggy we'll bird in nearby locations for vagrants and waterbirds. Bring lunch, liquids and spotting scopes. Sun screen, a hat and a wind breaker may be advisable. Leader: Tony Briggs (282-3142) or ask for Tony by name at 626-3131, an answering service. (✓)

**Saturday, October 4—Lands End, San Francisco.** Meet at **8 a.m.** at the Palace of the Legion of Honor parking lot (Lincoln Park). From Geary St. go north (toward the bay) on 34th Ave. to the top of the hill (through the golf course) and park in the large circular lot to the east (right). Lunch optional. We'll walk about two miles. Leaders: Donna Lion and Alan Hopkins (668-4840).

**Sunday, October 5—Sunol Regional Park.** Meet at **8 a.m.** at the Park Headquarters. Take I-680 south, exit at Calaveras Rd., go left and follow the signs to Sunol Park (about 5 miles). Bring lunch. We should see some wintering residents and fall migrants common to the interior. Leader: Art Edwards (447-3720). (✓)

**Saturday, October 25—Bus trip to Monterey Bay Area.** We will ride in the comfort of a chartered bus to many of Monterey's finest birding areas, including the municipal pier, the shoreline to Pt. Pinos and the Carmel River mouth. Our leader will be Ted Chandik. The bus will depart from the East Bay at **6:30 a.m.** and make stops in San Francisco and Palo Alto. The fare will be \$15 per person. Persons who signed up for the previous bus trip which had to be cancelled have first space priority so seats may be limited. Get your reservations in early by sending a self-addressed stamped envelope and check made payable to Golden Gate Audubon Society to the GGAS office, 2718 Telegraph Ave., #206, Berkeley, CA 94705. Details of the trip will be sent with an acknowledgment to the first 35 respondents.

**Problems:** If for any reason you have difficulty getting in touch with a field trip leader or need information regarding a trip, call Dan Murphy (564-0074) or the GGAS office (843-2222).

**Carpooling:** Carpooling arrangements can be made for trips marked (✓). If you need a ride or are offering one, call Kate Partridge at work (642-2881, 8 a.m.-1 p.m.) or at home before 9 p.m. (548-0779).

The Field Trips Committee suggests that a guideline of 20¢ per mile divided by the total number of riders (including driver) be used for setting the shared cost of each trip. This would cover gasoline only. Any other expenses, such as bridge tolls, or parking or entrance fees should also be divided equally.

—FIELD TRIPS COMMITTEE

## Late Spring and Summer Observations—

Through July 25

The spring vagrant season slipped by with only occasional excitement and no major waves on the mainland. Weather was kinder to Southeast Farallon Island, where both quantity and quality of eastern vagrants were very good (all observations by Point Reyes Bird Observatory). Nevertheless, a liberal sprinkling of real rarities, first nesting records and bizarre observations kept mainlanders occupied.

### WATERBIRDS

A Red-necked Grebe lingered to June 8 at the Fish Docks (SFB, mob). The season's first New Zealand Shearwater was seen two miles from Southeast Farallon July 12 (PRBO). An immature **Magnificent Frigatebird** visited the Island July 16-17 (PRBO) and another of this species was reported from Capitola July 21 (*fide* AB, DM). As predicted last year, **Little Blue Heron breeding** was confirmed in the Alviso egret-heron colony (SFB). At least one adult was found in the colony June 30 (SFB). On July 25 an adult and a calico-plumaged subadult (not the same as last year's hybrid — probably pure Little Blue Heron) foraged in a nearby salt pond. More significantly, two **juvenile** Little Blue Herons stood at the colony edge with young Snowy Egrets and one or more that may be hybrids (all SFB, *et al.*). If any of these locally-fledged juvenals was a hybrid then three adult Little Blues were required (two for a pure mating plus one for hybridization). This is not implausible; the two adults that visited Charleston Slough, Palo Alto, again this July (TC, *et al.*) are probably associated with the Alviso colony and the adult observed on the Alviso salt ponds may be another one. Furthermore, two

adult **Little Blue Herons** were at Gray Lodge July 28 (BED) for the first Central Valley record. Blue-winged Teals were exceptionally numerous, especially in Marin County (DS, JE, NB, DMcC, GH, mob). A single observer (DS) tallied over 29 individuals in late May-early June at six Marin and Sonoma locations, including 15 together at Novato June 7. Three others were at Alviso June 30 (SFB). In addition to the Harlequin Ducks residing at Sea Ranch, Año Nuevo, and Southeast Farallon, pairs were found on Tomales Bay in May (EF) and Bodega Harbor in June (HJ, *et al.*). A Black Rail called in Olema Marsh during days in mid-late June (JE).

Substantial numbers of our larger shorebirds summer, in non-breeding plumage, but small and uncommon shorebird species are rare during June. Two of the latter are the American Golden Plover at Pescadero May 31 (AE) through July 5 (BB) and the Red Knot at Moss Landing in mid-June (DR). Of the smaller shorebirds, many post-breeders return to San Francisco Bay by the end of June, especially Wilson's and Northern Phalaropes, Western Sandpipers and Short-billed Dowitchers, but a Long-billed Dowitcher at Alviso and ten more in Dumbarton Marsh June 30 seemed early (SFB). The American Golden Plover sporting breeding plumage at Alameda South Shore July 6 (TB) was either exceptionally early or exceptionally late! A Wilson's Phalarope on July 20 provided the second Farallon record.

Honors for Most Astounding Record go to the pair of **Heermann's Gulls nesting** on Alcatraz Island for the first breeding outside of Mexico! Their three-egg clutch was late in incubation on June 17 and an addled egg was collected outside the nest (LCB). The closest colony is in the San Benito Islands, where nesting also is during May and June, later than in other populations (Jehl 1976. *Western Birds* 7: 25-26). Also bizarre was the breeding plumaged **Arctic Tern wearing a band** at Stockton Sewage Ponds June 12 (DE, FH). Unfortunately it was not resighted; collecting this bird would have been very informative. Not only would we have learned where in the world (!) it was banded, its reproductive phase and perhaps its age, but algal cultures from its feathers might have confirmed this form of interpolar dispersal of algae with bipolar distributions (*fide* Robert Zink)! In comparison a one-year-old Common Tern at the Bay Bridge Toll Plaza June 23 (SFB) seems insignificant. A Black Tern was at Charleston Slough, Palo Alto, July 22 (BW, JMS, *et al.*). An Ancient Murrelet at Southeast Farallon April 26 was rather late. Several Tufted Puffins were seen at Point Reyes during late May and June, especially at the murre colony (mob). Three Rhinoceros Auklets were there June 11 (DS, JE).

## WESTERN LANDBIRDS

One would not expect to find a road-killed juvenal Saw-whet Owl in the Delta, yet one was at Mountain House and Kelso roads, extreme northeast Alameda County, July 14 (JF). Marin County's second Lesser Nighthawk gravitated to the bluff at Drakes Beach on June 20 (JE, DS, *et al.*). Two Black Swifts passed Pt. Reyes Lighthouse July 2 (JP, BDP). Perhaps the most bizarre of all this season's observations involved woodpeckers. The June 22 discovery in Bear Valley of Marin County's first **nesting Red-breasted Sapsuckers** coincided with the apparent killing and partial removal of the large nestlings by Acorn Woodpeckers (DS, JE)! The latter species is ever more intriguing.

A Willow Flycatcher inland from Wildcat Camp, Pt. Reyes National Seashore, July 5 (DS) seems late for a western migrant. The Piñon Jay at Pt. Reyes Lighthouse May 28-29 (GH, DS) was followed by a lost Mountain Chickadee at Fish Docks, Lighthouse and Nunes June 19-20 (JM, SFB, *et al.*). Less out-of-place but out-of-season were a female Varied Thrush at Nunes June 1 (SFB, *et al.*) and a male Mountain Bluebird at Fish Docks June 20 (JE, DS, *et al.*). Sage Thrashers visited Southeast Farallon on May 7 and May 21-24.

Elusive yet very tame was the stunning **singing male White Wagtail** at the Tiburon Environmental Center May 22 (BL, SS, JM, LC, *et al.*). Furthermore, its extensive black and largely white remiges in first breeding plumage showed it to be of the Kamchatkan race *lugens*, not the expected northeastern race *ocularis* which breeds in Alaska (JM). Our surprise was compounded when last year's **White Wagtail** returned to the Watsonville Sewage Ponds, was rediscovered July 20 (CF, *et al.*) and identified as another *lugens* (JM). Future White Wagtails should be described very meticulously in order to specify plumage and determine racial affinity. Tricolored Blackbirds initiated a nesting colony at the Drakes Beach Pond June 8 for apparently the first combined west Marin breeding (JM, *et al.*). Our pioneering male **Great-tailed Grackle** inhabited the Fort Mason area during May and June (KH, JH) where **nesting** was suspected at the foot of Van Ness Ave. (SH, SaH). This was confirmed June 20 (JM), but the nest failed. This is the only known breeding attempt for this species northwest of Death Valley. A Vesper Sparrow on Southeast Farallon June 1-2 was very late. Our latest Golden-crowned Sparrow on record was a non singing adult (female?) in Kensington last seen July 1 (NC).



White Wagtail (*Motacilla alba lugens*) seen at Tiburon Environmental Center, May 22, 1980. Photo by Leonard Compagno.

## EASTERN WARBLERS

Clear, windy and unsettled weather plagued the coastal vagrant season, but warblers were more plentiful than last year. Periods of sustained overcast and calm brought three good waves to SE Farallon: May 30-June 2, June 18-20 and June 29-July 2. Pt. Reyes received lesser waves corresponding to the first two, mostly on June 1 and June 20, but by the time of the third wave most vagrant hunters had quit. The table of warblers follows the format developed last fall. It includes 74 individuals of 15 species. The **Mourning Warbler** was only the second in spring for Northern California. Both **Golden-winged Warbler** and **Yellow-throated Warbler** were third spring records. Overall, the Golden-winged was number seven and the Yellow-throated the tenth. The eight or more Palm Warblers on SE Farallon represent a remarkable invasion for such a rare spring vagrant. Surely it is related to last fall's record flight, though probably none of these birds wintered in California; such Palm Warblers should reappear in April instead of arriving from late May to July with typical spring vagrants.

## Black-and-white Warbler (total 5; 6 for this spring)

1 female	Mendoza	May 30-June 1	BL, mob
1 male	Mendoza	June 1	DMCC, mob
1 female	Fish Docks	June 1	DMCC, mob
1 male	Lincoln Park, SF	June 9	AH, mob
1 male	SE Farallon	July 1	PRBO

## Golden-winged Warbler (total 1)

1 male	SE Farallon	June 18-20	PRBO
--------	-------------	------------	------

## Tennessee Warbler (total 14)

10	SE Farallon	May 3; May 31 (2); June 1 (4); June 29-July 2 (2); July 16-17	PRBO
1 male	Mendoza	May 31	AH, DL, et al.
1 male	Fish Docks	June 1	MG, HG, mob
1 male	Tilden Park	June 10	GH
1 male	Nunes	June 13	BL

## Magnolia Warbler (total 8)

4	SE Farallon	May 31-June 6; June 18-19; June 19-20; June 30-July 1	PRBO
1 male	Mendoza	June 17	JD, mob
1 male	Lincoln Park, SF	June 18	AH, KY
1 male	Fish Docks	June 19-21	JM, et al.
1 female	Fish Docks	June 20	DJ, et al.

## Cape May Warbler (total 5)

2 males	SE Farallon	June 1-2; June 19	PRBO
1 male	Pt. Reyes Lighthouse	June 1	DMCC, mob
male+female	Nunes	June 14	JM, mob

## Black-throated Green Warbler (total 1)

1 female	SE Farallon	June 18	PRBO
----------	-------------	---------	------

## Yellow-throated Warbler (total 1)

1 male	SE Farallon	May 2-4	PRBO
--------	-------------	---------	------

## Chestnut-sided Warbler (total 4)

1 male	Mt. Tamalpais	June 16	DT
1 male	Bear Valley	June 22	DS, JE
1 male	SE Farallon	June 29-July 2	PRBO
1 female?	Mendoza	July 1	SFB,DJ,WG,AG

## Bay-breasted Warbler (total 4)

3 females	SE Farallon	June 13; June 20; June 29-July 1	PRBO
1 male	Drakes Beach	June 20-21	SFB, et al.

## Blackpoll Warbler

1 male	SE Farallon	May 27	PRBO
1 female	SE Farallon	July 1	PRBO

## Palm Warbler (total 8)

8 (+1?)	SE Farallon	May 26; May 31; June 2; June 18; June 30-July 1; July 1-2; July 1-3	PRBO
---------	-------------	--	------

## Ovenbird (total 13)

1	Pt. Reyes Lighthouse	May 30	DMCC
12 (+?)	SE Farallon	May 30-31; May 31; May 31- June 1; June 3; June 18; June 19; June 20; June 29-30; June 30-July 1 (3); June 30-July 2	PRBO

## Mourning Warbler (total 1)

1 female	SE Farallon	June 30-July 1	PRBO
----------	-------------	----------------	------

## Hooded Warbler (total 3)

1 female	SE Farallon	July 1-2	PRBO
1 male	Tilden Park	July 4-26	LC,mob,GH
1 female	Pioneer Log Cabin, GG Park	July 15-20	LCB, et al.

## American Redstart (total 5)

1 male	Lincoln Park, SF	June 10-11	AH
1	SE Farallon	June 20	PRBO
1 male	Drakes Beach	June 20-21	JE, et al.
1 male	E of Guerneville	June 23	DB
1	Palomarin	June 30	PRBO

## OTHER EASTERN VAGRANTS

Eastern Kingbird was found twice,  $\frac{1}{2}$  mile beyond Abandoned Ranch June 30 (DS) and at Mendoza Ranch July 2 (JP, BDP). The final Farallon wave included a Red-eyed Vireo June 29-30. Singing male Bobolinks brightened Fish Docks May 27 (DS) and Pt. Reyes Lighthouse May 30 (BL), but SE Farallon had the only female June 20. Another Farallon female was the **Orchard Oriole** July 9. Amazingly, this is only its second occurrence as a spring vagrant; it is almost regular in fall and also winters. Our second spring and sixth overall **Scarlet Tanager** was a male that arrived on SE Farallon the same morning as the Golden-winged and four other warblers and was present six days (June 18-23).

Six Rose-breasted Grosbeaks were evenly divided between SE Farallon and the mainland:

2 males	SE Farallon	May 30; May 31	PRBO
1 female	SE Farallon	June 18	PRBO
1 male	near Lighthouse	June 20	DS JE
1	near Mt. Vision	June 22	NS tide DS
1	Lincoln Park, SF	June 29	HH

Birders were unable to find the annual territorial male Indigo Bunting beside Olema Marsh, but eight other males did appear:

1 male	Lincoln Park, SF	May 20	BS,MS,DeeM, et al.
1 male	Palomarin	May 25	PRBO
1 male	Mendoza	May 26	AG, WG
1 male	SE Farallon	May 30-31	PRBO
1 male	Pt. Reyes Lighthouse	June 1	MMcC, JK
1 male	Drakes Beach	June 1-2	MG, mob
1 male	near Sea Ranch	June 8	BDP, et al.
1 male	S of Stinson Beach	June 8	MK, SK

How many females were overlooked?

The Farallones continued their virtual monopoly on spring **Dickcissels** with a female May 18. Not as rare but very pretty was the breeding plumaged Lark Bunting near Nunes Ranch June 5-6 (DS). On SE Farallon, two Clay-colored Sparrows on June 1 were followed by another June 3. Last but not least, SE Farallon also contributed our latest (May 18) **Chestnut-collared Longspur** — in breeding plumage.

**Observers:** Stephen F. Bailey, Alan Baldridge, Dennis Beall, Laurenee C. Binford, Neil Blank, Bill Boarman, Tony Briggs, Leonard Campanago, Ted Chandik, Nancy Conzett, Lou Cooper, Jane Dang, Bruce E. Deuel, Art Edwards, Dick Erickson, Jules Evens, Jan Fischer, Carolyn Fredriksen, Esther Fuller, Greg Fulsaas, Al Ghiorso, Wilma Ghiorso, Heather Gordon (HGo), Helen Green (HG), Michael Green, Kem Hainebach, Frank Hall, Jay Harlow, Sarah Harrison (SaH), Scott Harrison (SH), Howard Honig, Alan Hopkins, George Hugenberg, Hans Johanson, Dick Johnson, Michael Kelly, Shirley Kelly, Jeri Keyak, Bill Lenarz, Donna Lion, Marie Mans, Dianne McClung, Mac McCormick, Debi Millichap (DM), Dee Mitchell (DeeM), many observers (mob), Joe Morlan, Point Reyes Bird Observatory (Farallon reports thanks to Bryant Bainbridge, *et al.*), Benjamin D. Parmeter, John Parmeter, Neil Powell, Don Roberson, Ben Seaver, Madge Seaver, Nancy Shine, Dave Shuford, Sue Smith, Jean Marie Spelman, Betty Wyatt, Keiko Yamane.

—STEPHEN F. BAILEY, *Observations Editor*

Museum of Vertebrate Zoology

University of California, Berkeley, CA 94720

(phone 548-9507; or Karen L. Bailey at 642-3327 8 a.m.-noon, 1-5 p.m.)

## Condor Tragedy: Fear Becomes Reality

On May 30, 1980, the California Fish and Game Commission approved the permit application for the controversial Condor Recovery Plan proposed by National Audubon Society and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. This plan, strongly opposed by GGAS, advocated the eventual capture of nine California Condors to establish a captive breeding flock to augment the sorely diminished wild population. The approval was a great disappointment to GGAS, following as it did on the heels of the discovery that two condor chicks had hatched this year. Also, as Dan Murphy had written in his article in the July-August *Gull*, two immature condors were seen on the 1979 GGAS field trip to Mt. Pinos. This renewal within the flock seemed to indicate to us that the birds were able to reproduce naturally and GGAS's recommendation of a hands-off approach coupled with attention to habitat preservation and expansion still seemed in the best interest of the species. overshadowing everything was our fear of death or injury to even one condor during a handling process.

As you are probably aware by now, one of the chicks died on June

30 after being weighed and measured at its nest by an employee of the Condor Recovery Team acting under a California Fish and Game Commission "memorandum of understanding" later acknowledged to be invalid because the approval of the permit application had specifically denied the Condor Recovery Team's request to visit nest sites. An autopsy showed that the 13-pound female chick died from shock and heart failure. Only trace amounts of environmental contaminants were found in the bird, indicating that pesticides or poisons were not a factor in the death.

Ironically, "Hope for the California Condor," an article published in *Audubon* magazine, January, 1965, contains a photograph of a condor chick with a caption reading, "Condor chick nestling photographed in 1941, before research disclosed intrusion could cause birds' death."

Immediately following the June 30 incident the California Fish and Game Commission revoked all permits for handling or capturing birds and the Condor Recovery Program was halted. It is uncertain now when a California Fish and Game Commission hearing concerning the renewal of permits to allow the Recovery Program to continue will be held, but GGAS will attend and reiterate our firm opposition to the program as presently constituted.

I intend to press for a full accounting from National Audubon Society about its present and future position regarding this tragic and unnecessary event. As I write this (August 6), it seems incredible that neither GGAS nor any other Audubon chapter has received communication from our parent organization on the matter.

If you are as concerned as I am regarding National Audubon Society's role in the Condor Recovery Program, write to me and I will pass on your thoughts, or write directly to Russell W. Peterson, President, National Audubon Society, 950 Third Ave., New York, NY 10022.

Write letters to the editors of your local newspapers indicating your indignation and concern about the condor chick's death. Contact any or all of the following to express your opposition to a renewal of the Condor Recovery Program:

Governor Edmund G. Brown, Jr., State Capitol Building, Sacramento, CA 95814, (916) 445-2841; Mr. Harold Cribbs, Executive Secretary, California Fish and Game Commission, 1416 Ninth St., Sacramento, CA 95814, (916) 445-3531; Mr. Huey Johnson, Secretary for Resources, 1416 Ninth St., Sacramento, CA 95814, (916) 445-5656; Honorable Cecil Andrus, Secretary of the Interior, Washington, DC 20240.

Plan to attend our September 11 general membership meeting (complete details on page 125) when we will show in its entirety the film of the nest visitation that resulted in the California Condor chick's death. Also shown is the visit by the Condor Recovery Team to the first, smaller chick's nest as well as excellent footage of the parent birds and their behavior.

—BOB HIRT, *President*

## Birding Lands End

### A GUIDE FOR SEAL ROCKS, LANDS END, LINCOLN PARK

San Francisco's Lands End is an area of breathtaking vistas and dynamic bird life. The rocky cliffs and small beaches make it the best place to observe ocean and shore birds in San Francisco. But the most attractive aspect of Lands End is the observation of migrant land birds. On a good day it is possible to see migrant hawks, flycatchers, orioles, tanagers, sparrows and warblers. A few days each spring and fall a "wave" of migrants will pass through and warblers can be seen by the hundreds!

The Lands End area was not birdwatched consistently until recently. Before becoming part of the Golden Gate National Recreation Area (GGNRA) the lack of police patrol made birdwatching a sometimes frightening experience. Fortunately the National Park Service has improved the trails and the area is patrolled regularly by horseback and motorcycle. But it is advisable to go with a friend and avoid leaving valuables in your car.

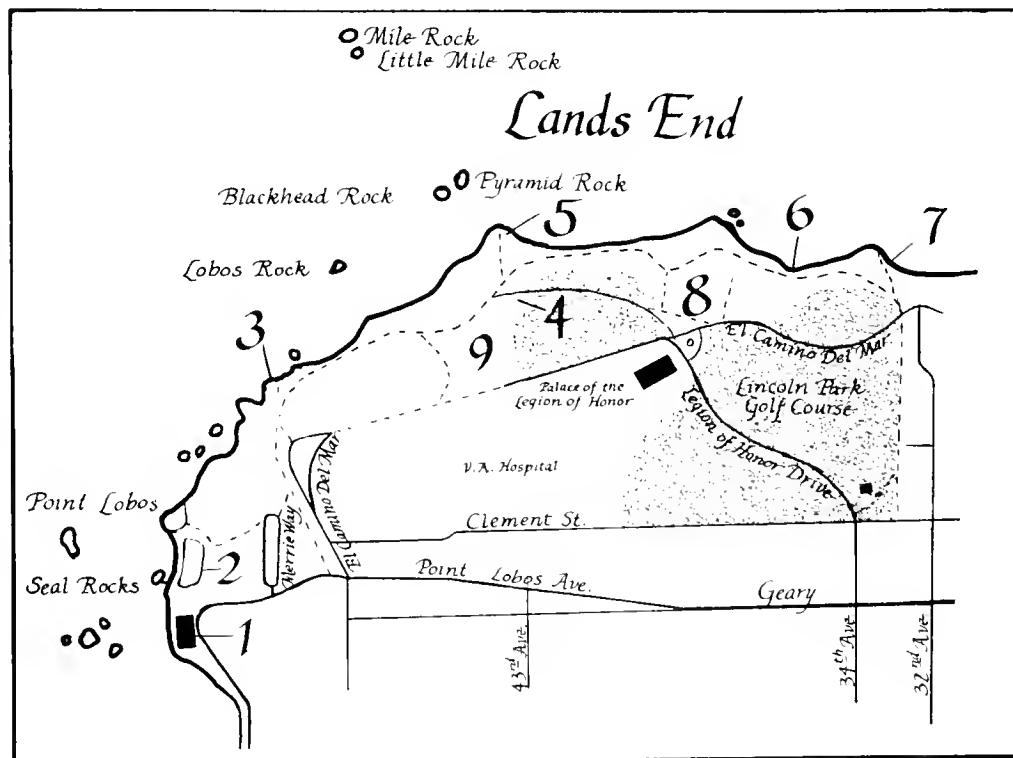
For the full tour, park on Merrie Way above the Sutro Baths and the Cliff House (1, 2). From here it is possible to make one large loop of the best spots at the Cliff House, Lands End and Lincoln Park.

Depending on the tides you may decide to begin or finish the tour at the Cliff House (1). The observation deck behind the restaurants is the best spot to scan Seal Rocks which abound with bird life. There are usually a few Pelagic Cormorants among the many Brant's year round. In mid-June the Brown Pelicans arrive with their cohorts, the Heermann's Gulls. By mid-July the shorebirds begin to reappear. Among the pelicans and cormorants look for Black Oystercatchers, Wandering Tattlers, Willets, Surfbirds, Ruddy and Black Turnstones and Sanderlings. As winter approaches the ocean becomes alive with Common, Arctic and Red-throated Loons, Western Grebes, White-winged, Surf and sometimes Black Scotters. During the fall and winter the wind frequently blows from the east. These easterly winds cause upwelling of the cold bottom waters which are rich in nutrients. Birds like Bonaparte's Gulls, Forster's, Elegant and Caspian Terns come to feed on the rich waters.

With them might be pelagic birds like Parasitic Jaeger, Black-legged Kittiwake and Common Tern. For a few days in the spring, late summer or fall thousands of Sooty Shearwaters may be seen in large rafts just beyond Seal Rock.

After the Cliff House the next spot to check is Sutro Baths (2). Look for the trail down to the pond at the north end of the parking lot at Merrie Way. The brackish water of the pond attracts small numbers of water fowl; Mallards and American Wigeon are present all winter. They may be joined by Ring-necked Ducks, Greater and Lesser Scaup and Common and Barrow's Goldeneyes. In the winter of 1979 both Red and Northern Phalaropes visited the pond. Killdeer and other shorebirds can sometimes be found along the shallow water at the south end of the pond. After checking the pond follow the trail to the large flat cement area on Point Lobos. This is a good spot to scope Seal Rocks and the water. On the north side of the steps is a small pond that can be good for a close look at shorebirds. In the spring California Gray Whales sometimes come within 100 yards of the point.

To continue the tour check the row of eypress trees at the end of the parking lot for warblers. Follow the trail that heads northeast at the east end of these trees. Keep to the right until the trail meets with the



dirt service road, then watch on the left for the old foundation (3). This is a good place to scan the ocean. In summer watch for Common Murre and Sooty Shearwater. There are usually a few Pigeon Guillemots on the large rock to the east. In the winter the cove created by the large rock is a good place to study gulls and terns.

From the foundation the road goes slightly inland. After about a quarter mile there is a large grassy area which can be good for land birds. This area is the bottom of the "western wash." As the road bends to the north watch for the paved road on the right. This road leads to the Palace of the Legion of Honor through Lincoln Golf Course but follow it only as far as the large patch of willows (4). In the winter the cypress trees on the left are the most consistent spot to find Townsend's Warblers at Lands End. The willows are most productive when they bud in late winter and early spring at which time they are swarming with Anna's, Allen's and Rufous Hummingbirds. There may also be Bewick's Wren, Hutton's Vireo, Yellow-rumped Warbler and Purple Finch. During migration this spot is always worth checking. Black-throated Gray Warblers and MacGillivray's Warblers plus Indigo Buntings have all stopped here.

To continue the tour go back to the dirt road and watch for the trail by some trash cans that leads to Lands End proper (5). From the tip of the point there is a fine view of the coast. Scoping below the light-house on Mile Rock has produced Marbled and Ancient Murrelet in winter and Common Murre in summer. The bird life around Mile Rock is most active when a strong tide churns up bottom waters around it. Loons, grebes, cormorants, gulls and terns can be found in large numbers at its base when this occurs. Closer to shore are Pyramid Rock and Black-head Rock and to the west is Lobos Rock. In the winter of 1979 these rocks were frequented by two Harlequin Ducks.

After returning to the main road continue east. At the sheer cliff watch below for Pigeon Guillemots in the summer. In the fall look for shorebirds, gulls and Elegant Terns on the rocks. Next follow the trail over the steps and where the trail forks at the bottom of the "east wash," veer to the left.

As the trail rounds the point the foliage becomes much thicker. There are usually Chestnut-backed Chickadees, Common Bushtits, Song and White-crowned Sparrows. In winter they are joined by Ruby-crowned Kinglets, Fox and Golden-crowned Sparrows. During migration watch for flycatchers, Warbling Vireo, Orange-crowned and Wilson's Warblers. There are also records for Black-and-white Warblers, Northern Parula and Summer Tanager. Be sure to check the acacias and willows that grow over the "boardwalk" (6) as they can be quite productive.

As the trail reaches its end (7), Lincoln Park Golf Course appears on the right. The open area to the left once had nesting Pygmy Nuthatches and Tree Swallows but unfortunately the park service cut down all the nesting trees. From the cliff's edge look east to James D. Phelan Beach where Long-billed Curlew, Whimbrel and Marbled Godwit may be among the Willets and Sanderlings on the beach far below.

Before starting up El Camino Del Mar check the first 100 yards of trail which begins directly across the street and runs along the 18th green to Legion of Honor Dr. at 43rd Ave. The pine and cypress trees that line the green may have swallows, nuthatches, Brown Creepers, warblers and possibly Red Crossbills.

There always seems to be bird activity along El Camino Del Mar. Downy Woodpecker, Olive-sided Flycatcher, Tree Swallow, Pygmy Nuthatch and Dark-eyed Junco have all nested along the road. In winter Yellow-rumped Warblers are abundant and Townsend's Warblers can be fairly common in the pine, cypress and eucalyptus trees. During the fall there may be Nashville, Black-throated Gray and Hermit Warblers and vagrants like Northern Parula, Chestnut-sided and Blackpoll Warblers have been found here.

Near the top of the hill just as El Camino Del Mar meets with Legion of Honor Dr. look for the small paved road. Follow the road down until it reaches the golf greens, then take the small dirt trail to the right. I call this area the "east wash" (8). During migration check the flock of sparrows for Savannah, Vesper, Chipping, White-throated and Lincoln's. When in bloom, the large patch of sweet fennel (anise) is a haven for birds. A little fishing may bring in Bewick's Wren, Hutton's Vireo, Orange-crowned and Wilson's Warblers. During migration watch for flycatchers, Blue-gray Gnatcatchers, warblers, Black-headed Grosbeaks and Lazuli Buntings. The trees that line the east wash are the most productive on the loop. Among the common birds in spring and fall there may be many migrants. Some of the vagrants have included Black-and-white, Tennessee, Magnolia and Blackburnian Warblers.

To continue the loop, walk back to El Camino Del Mar. Follow the dead end road down the hill. In winter there may be Varied and Hermit Thrushes under the trees on the left. When the road ends continue straight to the trail down to the "east wash" (9). On a hot day this spot is a must. There is always a trickle of water running through the willows. The trees may be filled with birds that have come to drink and bathe. Unfortunately this spot also seems to be a rendezvous for homosexuals. On some days a little fishing can produce many migrants and a few men! It can be very reassuring to have a friend along. Although I have

birded here many times by myself I have never had a problem. The western wash usually has hummingbirds, Scrub Jays, Bewick's Wrens, Hutton's Vireos and Purple Finches. During migration this seems to be a favorite stopping place for Western Flycatchers and Nashville Warblers. Among the many common migrants that stop here, specialties like Orchard Oriole, Indigo Bunting and Swamp Sparrow have occurred.

To finish the loop follow the path straight onto the old El Camino Del Mar. There are usually many common birds along the road until it ends at the parking lot at the end of El Camino Del Mar. From the northwest end of the parking lot look for the steps that lead back down to the old foundation (3). From there retrace your steps to the parking lot at Merrie Way.

It may not always be desirable to do this large loop. By parking at the Palace of Legion of Honor, smaller loops can be made from the trails that run up and down the washes connecting the upper road and lower trail. From season to season you will find Seal Rocks, Lands End and Lincoln Park ever changing and, for me, ever fascinating.

—ALAN HOPKINS

## Fall Birding Classes

### ALBANY

**Dr. Stephen F. Bailey**, *Gull* Observations Editor, will teach two GGAS-sponsored classes at Albany Adult School:

**Raptors** will cover identification and natural history of hawks and related birds of prey. Emphasis will be on California species and migration. Evening sessions will meet 7-9 p.m. on four consecutive Tuesdays from September 16 through October 7. Field trips to the Point Diablo hawk lookout to observe migrating hawks will be on two Saturdays — September 20 and October 18.

**Quantitative Field Observation** will introduce and teach methods of counting and estimating bird numbers under various conditions and ways of taking quantitative records of bird activities (e.g. foraging, social behavior, habitat use). Participation in this course should allow birders to do amateur field ornithology; i.e., to conduct modest field research of scientific merit. Whether your studies are to satisfy your own curiosity, for professional gain or to further your pet conservation project, you will want observations that yield convincing conclusions. The evening orientation session will be from 7-9 p.m., Tuesday, October 21. Three Saturday field training sessions will be on October 25, November 8 and 22.

To register call the school at 526-6811. For more information call Steve at 548-9507.

## SAN FRANCISCO

**Joe Morlan** will continue his classes through the Galileo-Marina Community College Center. A beginning class starts Tuesday, September 9; the intermediate class starts Wednesday, September 3, and an advanced class starts Thursday, September 4.

All classes meet weekly from 7 p.m.—9:30 p.m. in room 254, Marina Middle School, for 18 weeks. The school is at the corner of Fillmore and Bay streets. There is ample free parking in the lot just east of the school off Bay St.

To register just come to the first class of the course you wish to take. There are no fees or tuition for the evening classes. An optional fee of \$21 will be charged for those who wish to participate in a program of seven half-day field trips arranged on weekends to observe wild birds in natural habitats.

The beginning class is designed for those who have had no previous birdwatching experience but would like to become acquainted with the many common birds found in the Bay Area. This course stresses the major characteristics of the native avifauna.

The intermediate class continues in a systematic treatment of water birds beginning with Storks. The advanced class treats land birds starting with Thrashers. Both are suitable for those who wish to sharpen their field identification skills.

All classes feature wild bird slides to illustrate their identification. Bring binoculars.

For further information call the college at 931-3595.

## Least Tern Colony's Dispersal

A total of 88 California Least Tern nests containing eggs was recorded at the Alameda Naval Air Station during the 1980 nesting season and 85 chicks were observed to have hatched successfully. On July 2, however, all birds were found to have suddenly abandoned the colony site. Some nests still had eggs in them. The cause of the dispersal was presumed to be incursions by American Kestrels which had been observed killing chicks since June 25, although other factors may have been cats or the rain which fell on July 1-2.

A small group of mixed age chicks with adult birds was subsequently located later on July 2 approximately one-quarter mile north of the original colony site. On July 3 this group moved west and settled near the edge of the Bay. By July 9 only one chick, one or two adults and

a few fledglings were observed at that location. It was not possible to determine whether the young birds survived to the post-fledgling stage.

Other elements affected the nesting success of the terns: 14 medium or large chicks were run over by jets while roaming on adjacent runways and 12 small chicks succumbed to exposure.

Laura Collins, supervisor of the GGAS-sponsored Least Tern Study, says that recommendations for managing the colony in the future will consider all factors recognized during the three months' study of the primary Bay Area nesting site of the terns.

## 1981 Texas Birding Trip

This GGAS-sponsored spring birding trip to Texas is a repeat of the 1978 trip which recorded more than 280 species. We will bird the lower Rio Grande valley and the coast plus an optional trip to Big Bend National Park. The leaders are Kenn Kaufman and Mike Wihler. Dates are April 18-30 for the main part of the trip to be extended to May 3 if we go into Big Bend. At least six people will be required for this extension. For more information call Mike Wihler, 664-6567.

## 1981 Birders' Calendar and Almanac

The 1981 edition of the popular and handsome GGAS-published *Birders' Calendar and Almanac* with text by Stephen Bailey and drawings by Pedro Gonzalez went to press in mid-August. These make especially nice Christmas presents, so think ahead and order your copies now through the GGAS office at \$5 each, postpaid, including tax.

## PRBO Bird-a-thon

This year's Pt. Reyes Bird Observatory's Bird-a-thon will also benefit the Mono Lake Fund. You can participate either by counting as many species of birds as you can on Saturday, September 27, or by sponsoring a counter. For full information contact PRBO, 4990 Shoreline Hwy., Stinson Beach, CA 94970, (415) 868-1221.

## Mono Lake Benefit

On Thursday, September 4, from 7-9 p.m. the Nature Company, located at 1999 El Dorado Ave., Berkeley, will host a \$10 per person benefit for Mono Lake. On display will be an exclusive collection of pre-Colombian gold jewelry reproductions honoring the California Academy of Sciences exhibition, "Gold of El Dorado, Heritage of Colombia." Champagne and hors d'oeuvres will be provided by Narsai's. Advance reservations required; call 524-6336.

## Classes at Audubon Canyon Ranch

Seven stimulating classes with an emphasis on natural history will be offered this fall and winter, beginning October 1, through Audubon Canyon Ranch. Expert instructors include Dave DeSante, Rich Stallcup and John Kipping. Classes are limited to 25 persons. For a brochure or more information contact Volunteer Canyon, 4800 State Route #1, Stinson Beach, CA 94970, (415) 868-0611.

## Volunteers Needed for GGAS Committees

The Financial Committee is looking for eager financial wizards or witches to help expand the committee's effectiveness. The Conservation Committee needs volunteers to assist in monitoring California and Bay Area environmental legislation and the Mono Lake and California Condor issues. Call Bob Hirt (622-5148, days; 383-5337, evenings) or Jerry Emory (843-2222) now!

### GIFTS AND BEQUESTS

#### For Least Tern Study

Ed Jameyson  
Peter M. LaTourrette  
Elsie B. Roemer  
Sylvia Sykora

#### For GGAS

Raymond Hasey  
E. K. Adlmann  
Estate of  
Thelma Dille Martin

#### In memory of

Harold W. Sharp

Anita and Tedd Marvin  
Athene of California

#### Maurice Simon

David and Helen Springer

#### In honor of retirement of

Maggie Saulsberry

Kensington School District  
Janet E. Sage  
Jean Mock

Memorial and honorary gifts and bequests will be used as specified by the donors. Acknowledgments will be made in *The Gull* and personally by the Corresponding Secretary, Minnie Groshong. Please send checks made out to the Golden Gate Audubon Society to: Corresponding Secretary, GGAS, 2718 Telegraph Avenue, #206, Berkeley, CA 94705. All gifts are tax deductible.



Golden Gate Audubon Society, Inc.  
Office: 843-2222  
2718 Telegraph Avenue, #206  
Berkeley, California 94705  
Return Postage Guaranteed

Library, California Academy of  
Science  
Golden Gate Park  
San Francisco 13, California 94118

## THE GULL

September, 1980

### OFFICERS

President, Robert Hirt (383-5337)\*  
First Vice President, Bruce Howard (254-2429)\*  
Second Vice President, Deborah Hirt (383-5337)\*  
Treasurer, John Stewart (524-3575)\*  
Recording Secretary, Helen Green (526-5943)\*  
Corresponding Secretary, Minnie Groshong (526-8443)\*

### STANDING COMMITTEE CHAIRMEN

Conservation, GGAS office (843-2222)\*  
Education, Kay Steinberg (751-4293)\*  
Martha Morrow (832-7141)\*  
Field Trips, Dan Murphy (564-0074)\*  
Betty Short  
Extended Field Trips, Tony Briggs (282-3142)\*  
Finance, Wally Smith (223-0141)\*  
Emeryville Crescent, Shirley Taylor (845-2415)\*

\*Members of the Board of Directors

NORTHERN CALIFORNIA RARE BIRD ALERT (recorded) 843-2222

Executive Director, Jerry Emory (843-2222)

Mail for all individuals listed above should be sent to the GGAS office.

Send address changes to office promptly; Post Office does not forward *THE GULL*. Monthly meetings: second Thursday, 7:30 p.m. Joint membership — local and national \$20 per year (individual); \$25 (family); includes *AUDUBON* Magazine and *THE GULL*; to join, make checks payable to National Audubon Society and send to GGAS office to avoid delay in receiving *THE GULL*. Membership renewals should be sent directly to the National Audubon office. Subscriptions to *THE GULL* separately \$5 per year; single issues 75¢. High school and college student membership \$13.50 per year. Senior citizen individual, \$13.50, senior citizen family, \$15.50.

The Golden Gate Audubon Society, Inc. was established January 25, 1917, and became a chapter of National Audubon in 1948.

***The Gull* deadline is the first of the month for the following month.**